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Letter dated 24 March 2017 from the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the statement by the President of the Security Council of 20 January 2017 (S/PRST/2017/2) in which, inter alia, he encouraged continued close and effective cooperation between the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the Peacebuilding Commission in support of sustainable peace in West Africa and emphasized the convening role of the Commission, in collaboration with UNOWAS, in mobilizing the support of the relevant stakeholders in advancing the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

In this connection, the Commission convened a meeting to discuss the situation in the Sahel on 6 March 2017. The Commission was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and Head of UNOWAS, Mohamed Ibn Chambas; the High Representative of the African Union for Mali and the Sahel, Pierre Buyoya; the Permanent Secretary of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), Najim Elhadj Mohamed; the European Union Special Representative for the Sahel, Angel Losada; the Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa of the United Nations Development Programme, Abdoulaye Mar Dieye; and the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Oscar Fernandez-Taranco. Representatives of the countries of the G-5 Sahel, namely Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and the Niger, also participated in the meeting.

The briefers welcomed the recent positive political developments in the region, but also expressed serious concerns over the fragile security situation in the Sahel, particularly with regard to the spread of terrorist attacks across the region, some of which are connected to transnational organized crime. They stressed the need for enhanced cooperation, coordination and coherence in the ongoing national, regional and international efforts to address the political, security, humanitarian and development challenges of the region, especially among the numerous initiatives and studies on the Sahel. Several speakers cited underdevelopment as the root cause of many of the challenges, and called for greater investment in the region's infrastructure. They also highlighted the need for increased commitment and support to the region by both bilateral and multilateral partners.

Members of the Commission welcomed the opportunity to discuss the situation in the Sahel, and recognized the role that the Commission can play, through its convening and advisory role, in sustaining international attention towards the region's challenges. A number of the Commission members welcomed stronger collaboration between the Commission and UNOWAS in the implementation of the integrated strategy, and pointed out the need for greater efforts to coordinate the varying regional and international strategies on the Sahel. Several members also invited the Security Council to share with the Commission the results of the Council's mission to the Lake Chad Basin in early March.

I wish to inform you that, as a follow-up to this meeting, I intend to further consult with Mr. Chambas and the members of the Commission on the practical ways in which the Commission can strengthen its collaboration with UNOWAS in implementing the integrated strategy. I also intend to undertake and organize a variety of activities in connection with advancing the implementation of the integrated strategy and, to this end, to mobilize the support of other relevant stakeholders, such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **Cho** Tae-yul
Chairperson
Peacebuilding Commission